

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A gas sensor comprising a sensor element having a gas-introducing hole ~~close to~~ at an end of said sensor element, and having upper and lower surfaces;

said sensor element including a reference gas-introducing space, a clogging preventative space, a buffering space, a first space for introducing a measurement gas therein from said gas-introducing hole via the clogging preventative space, the buffering space and a first diffusion rate-determining section, a main pumping means for controlling a partial pressure of oxygen contained in said measurement gas introduced into said first space to be substantially constant, a second space for introducing said measurement gas therein from said first space via a second diffusion rate-determining section, an electric signal-generating converting means for reducing or decomposing a NO_x component contained in said measurement gas introduced from said second space via a third diffusion rate-determining section to generate an electric signal corresponding to an amount of oxygen produced thereby so that a concentration of NO_x existing in said measurement gas is determined from said electric signal, a first detecting means including an inner electrode in said first space and a reference electrode in said reference gas-introducing space, and a heater for maintaining at least said first space and said second space at a predetermined temperature, said heater being disposed only at a lower portion of said sensor element, wherein

$$0.3 \leq (W_c/W_e) < 0.7$$

wherein W_e represents a lateral width of said end of said sensor element, and W_c represents a lateral width of said gas-introducing hole, and

$$0.2 < (L_a/W_e) < 0.5$$

wherein L_a represents a distance from a projected position of an end of said heater on ~~an~~ said upper surface of said sensor element to said end of said sensor element,

wherein a starting end position is defined as a projected position of an end of said first space close to said gas-introducing hole on said upper surface of said sensor element, and said projected position of said end of said heater on said upper surface of said sensor element extends only to a ~~said starting end of said first space on said upper surface of said sensor element~~ position, and

wherein an air-fuel ratio of said measurement gas is determined by said first detecting means from a voltage between said inner electrode and said reference electrode and a pumping current of said main pumping means.

2. (Original) The gas sensor according to claim 1, wherein said electric signal-generating converting means is a measuring pumping means which reduces or decomposes said NO_x component contained in said measurement gas introduced from said second space via said third diffusion rate-determining section, which pumps out oxygen produced thereby, and which detects a current generated by pumping out the oxygen.

3. (Original) The gas sensor according to claim 1, wherein said electric signal-generating converting means is a detecting means which reduces or decomposes said NO_x component contained in said measurement gas introduced from said second space via said third diffusion rate-determining section and which detects an electromotive force corresponding to a difference between an amount of oxygen produced by said reduction or decomposition and an amount of oxygen contained in a reference gas.

4-5. (Cancelled).

6. (Original) The gas sensor according to claim 1, wherein each of said first diffusion rate-determining section and said second diffusion rate-determining section is defined by a slit provided in said sensor element.
7. (Previously Presented) The gas sensor according to claim 1, wherein said sensor element further includes a fourth diffusion rate-determining section between said clogging preventative space and said buffering space.
8. (Original) The gas sensor according to claim 7, wherein said fourth diffusion rate-determining section is defined by a slit provided in said sensor element.
9. (Original) The gas sensor according to claim 8, wherein a lateral width of said clogging-preventive space, a lateral width of said buffering space, a lateral width of said slit of said first diffusion rate-determining section, and a lateral width of said slit of said fourth diffusion rate-determining section are substantially identical with each other.
10. (Original) The gas sensor according to claim 9, wherein said lateral width of said gas-introducing hole is substantially identical with said lateral width of said clogging-preventive space.
11. (Original) The gas sensor according to claim 1, further comprising an auxiliary pumping means for controlling a partial pressure of oxygen contained in said measurement gas introduced into said second space.